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ABSTRACT

This bulletin, the first technical assistance bulletin produced by the Special Education Effective Practices Section of the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, is intended to share research-based promising practices with educators including family members, teachers, building administrators, and paraprofessionals. It discusses the particulars of implementing a school-wide positive behavior intervention and support (PBIS) system, and describes the five steps involved in implementing this type of systems-based change, including: (1) forming a team; (2) establishing need, priorities, and commitment; (3) drafting a mission statement; (4) developing working structures, such as an action plan that involves describing staff responsibilities, securing staff commitment, and detailing activities, resources, and schedules for achieving the school's behavioral support needs; and (5) developing maintenance structures. Examples are provided of team decisions that result in encouraging positive behavior. The bulletin also includes a list of five steps for making social skills instruction effective, including teaching the skill, demonstrating the skill, providing an opportunity to practice that skill, reviewing and testing the skill, ad embedding the skill into the curriculum. (CR)

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EP NOTES

EFFECTIVE PRACTICES TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE BULLETIN

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION & SUPPORT (PBIS) SYSTEM

JANUARY 2001

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EP notes

January 2001

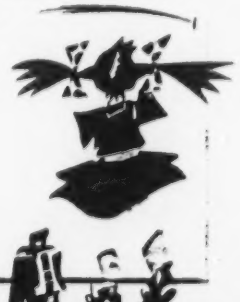
Effective Practices Technical Assistance Bulletin

Positive Behavior Intervention & Support (PBIS) System

Increasingly, media attention has focused on outstanding moments of crime and violence in schools across the United States. Political venues at the federal, state, and local level argue for more stringent disciplinary actions against students who misbehave in or around school property. School districts and state Boards of Education take up "zero tolerance" mantras to curb school violence and instill order in classrooms. This movement toward zero tolerance, however, flies in the face of federal requirements for students with disabilities, found in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA '97), and is generally found ineffective for students without disabilities (as reported more extensively in the *Missouri Innovations in Education* newsletter, November 2000).

This issue of *EP Notes* will discuss the particulars of implementing a school-wide positive behavior intervention and support (PBIS) system. There are five steps involved in implementing this type of systems-based change:

1. Forming a team
2. Establishing need, priorities, and commitment
3. Drafting a mission statement
4. Developing working structures
5. Developing maintenance structures



This is the first technical assis- ulletin produced by the Special Education Effective Practices Section. The purpose of this bulletin is to share research-based promising practices with educators including family members, teachers, building administrators, and paraprofessionals. Please feel free to share this bulletin with your colleagues and contact the Special Education Effective Practices Section for more information, (573) 751-0187.

Each step will be discussed in further depth.

Forming a team and establishing need, priorities, and commitment

In order to affect change, it is important to have building-level teams with active administrator participation or support. These teams meet at least monthly and have the support of other staff members, who know and understand the team purpose and its progression. The building-based team may already be in place as a teacher-assistance team, school-support team, at-risk referral team, or other building-based group. This team will operate as the gatekeeper for more intensive behavioral interventions and supports.

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The team then establishes a standard system for communication within the team and among staff members. It conducts a needs assessment, analyzes the assessment data, and generates an action plan that includes any needed staff development. The team is in charge of developing regular staff development training on PBIS strategies and for sharing information with community stakeholders.

Drafting a mission statement

While naysayers discount mission statements, developing a statement of purpose is actually a key component to effective change. There may be a significant difference between implementing a mission of "promoting obedient students and minimal disruption" and "promoting safe and effective school settings." When participants are confused during the implementation or maintenance phases, a mission statement is a handy tool for refocusing the school community on the team's original goals. When making decisions, the team can refer to the mission statement and ask whether the item for discussion meets the objectives of this statement. Clarifying the team's purpose from the start eliminates the need for backtracking and answering the question, "Why are we here?" at a later date.

Developing working structures

Developing an action plan involves describing staff responsibilities, securing staff commitment, and detailing activities, resources, and schedules for achieving the school's behavioral support needs. The plan is developed based on the data and needs assessment. A clear data-collection approach should be established before implementation in order to guide any necessary modifications. A solid understanding of the goal, the plan, and what constitutes success should be agreed upon by all participants.

In the action plan, the building or district needs to identify and define clear rules that cover all people and all settings in the school environment. There should be just a few rules—no more than five—rather than endless pages of regulations and requirements. Adults dislike convoluted regulations and so do young people. The rules should be positively and briefly stated.

Once five or fewer rules have been identified and stated, the team, with staff participation, identifies replacement behaviors. Replacement behaviors specify what the staff members want the students to do instead of what they are currently doing. An example:

Smith Elementary School is a K-8 building that is generally thought to be a safe place. The current concern is the amount of before-school hallway loitering. The older students are especially boisterous, pushing and yelling as they joke with friends. The morning kindergarten students have been teased repeatedly during their walk from the bus to their classroom, and the bus drivers have reported recently that kindergarten students are crying and becoming disobedient as the bus arrives at school in the morning.

Old: More teachers are required to patrol the hallways before school sending disruptive students to the office for any inappropriate behavior.

New: Bus drivers and teachers meet with the building team to discuss the problem and strategize. The team and staff determine that older students have nowhere desirable to go when they arrive at school early. The younger children play on the playground and the kindergartners go straight to their classroom from the bus. A decision is made that students can go to the gymnasium or adjoining cafeteria if they are not on the playground. Teachers who

were formerly required to be roaming the halls will now rotate through the cafeteria or gym, with only one teacher needed to monitor the hallways. Basketballs will be available in the gym for student use.

Once a problem behavior and its replacement(s) are identified, all teachers are notified using the previously agreed upon communication system, so students can be taught the new behavior explicitly.

Continuing with the Smith Elementary School example:

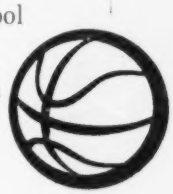
Teachers and staff at Smith Elementary School agreed that notes in their mailboxes would be the most reliable and efficient method of communication for their building. Following discussions between team members and staff, the team writes a one-page summary of the problem behavior, its replacement behavior, and some suggestions for incorporating the new behavior into the instructional day.

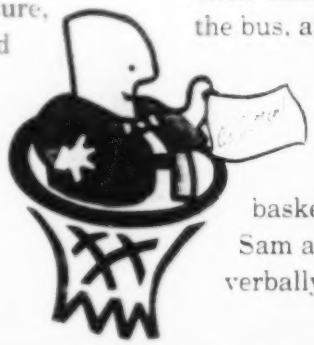
In the morning, Mr. Jones, a fifth grade teacher, notices the communication slip in his mailbox. He doesn't have many students who arrive at school before the buses, but knows that consistency is a key component of effective school-wide efforts. He begins the day with his students by discussing different places to "hang out" before and after school. The students discuss the positive and negative aspects of each location and how these aspects relate to the school rule of "Be Safe." Mr. Jones leads them in a discussion on possible alternative places to hang out before disclosing the designated locations for free play before school. Throughout the week, and especially as the weather gets colder and buses are delayed, he reinforces the use of designated locations with further reminders and discussion. He even rehearses going to the gym or cafeteria from the student drop-off location with his students.

Developing maintenance structures

In order to maintain the behavioral skills that all students have been taught, the staff and team must determine how to incorporate new students into the school culture, positively reinforce students who have demonstrated the expected behavior, and further assist students who continue to demonstrate undesirable behavior after classroom intervention.

The team decides that one way to encourage expected behavior is to present tangible "Go Getter" slips to students seen performing appropriate behavior. Previously, students received slips from teachers only if referred to the office for a disciplinary infraction. Now students would also receive "Go Getter" slips that could be redeemed in the school store and would be displayed on the cafeteria wall toward a potential school-wide party at the end of the semester.





When Sam, who normally rides the bus, arrives at school by car early one morning and immediately goes to the gym for a game of pick-up basketball, Mr. Jones gives Sam a "Go Getter" slip and verbally praises him for

5 Steps to Teaching Social Skills

When teaching social skills or any other behavioral skill, there are five steps to making the instruction effective:

- **First,** all students must understand when the skill is to be used. Therefore, the teacher must teach the rule.
- **Second,** the skill must be demonstrated.
- **Third,** students must have an opportunity to practice that skill.
- **Fourth,** the skill should be reviewed and tested to ensure that all students have a clear understanding of the skill and the ability to complete it successfully.
- **Finally,** the skill must be embedded into the curriculum.

remembering the rule and going directly to one of the designated hang-out locations before school.

When Mr. Jones combines verbal praise with the tangible reward of a "Go Getter" slip, he increases the likelihood that Sam will correlate verbal praise and the "Go Getter" ticket with the good feeling he has internally. This practice of tying tangible and external rewards with positive feelings helps Sam move toward self-fulfillment and intrinsic motivation.

In order to assist transfer students throughout the year, incoming students are paired with classmates to find their classes, learn the culture, and become acclimated to the school setting. Students who continue to demonstrate undesirable behavior after classroom intervention are referred to the team to assist the teacher in brainstorming additional supports and interventions. The team also acts as a gatekeeper for referrals for more intensive interventions such as at-risk services and special education evaluations.

The team monitors office referrals by grade, teacher, gender, location, student, and type of problem behavior on a monthly basis. When it seems that there are trends in the data, the team organizes activities to problem-solve the issue. Sometimes the activities provide additional skills to be taught to a group of students, the whole student body, or particular teachers or staff members. In any case, the process is an on-going activity to teach skills, encourage expected behavior, and monitor new concerns and effectiveness.

Additional Resources

Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice. Available http://cecp.air.org/fba/default.htm

Dr. Tim Lewis' homepage, Associate Professor, University of Missouri-Columbia. Available http://web.missouri.edu/~spedtl/lewis.html

Early Warning, Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools. Available http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/earlywrn.html

Effective Behavior Support. Available http://brt.uoregon.edu/ebs

Ensuring Early Success: Reducing Anti-Social Behavior Through Effective Behavioral Support. Available http://web.missouri.edu/~spedtl/antisoc.html

OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. Available www.pbis.org

The Behavior Home Page. Available http://www.state.ky.us/agencies/behave/ebs1.html

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